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Security Council

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Letter dated 4 March 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to transmit herewith the report on the international security presence in Kosovo from the period from 1 to 31 January 2004 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this report to the attention of the members of the Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

[Original: English]

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. Over the reporting period (1-31 January 2004) there were 19,083 Kosovo Force (KFOR) troops in theatre.

Security

2. Tensions among the population of Kosovo decreased slightly during the reporting period. The number of violent intra- and inter-ethnic events was smaller than in January 2003 and reached the lowest level since January 2003. Nevertheless, ethnic tensions remained high in Kosovo; 15 attempted murders and 3 murders were reported in January 2004. These incidents confirm the fragility of the security situation in Kosovo.

3. On 30 January, KFOR accepted the surrender of Avdil Jakupi, known as "Commander Cakala", and an associate in Urosevac. Both men were later handed over to UNMIK police. Avdil Jakupi was wanted in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[1] for armed robbery, extremist activity and the kidnapping of two former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia police officers on 27 August 2003.

4. On 7 January 2004, a bus with Russian and Serbian visitors from the non-governmental St. Andrew Foundation heading for the Orthodox Christmas liturgy at the Decani monastery[2] was met by an angry crowd of Kosovo Albanians, who threw stones and snowballs against the bus, breaking a window. On the evening of 10 January, a crowd of approximately 250 Kosovo Serbs gathered in the village of Novo Naselje and blocked the road. A KFOR patrol observed a group of approximately 30 Kosovo Albanians, with sticks and axes, moving against the crowd. A Quick-Reaction Force platoon and a dog squad were deployed to the scene and the situation calmed down. For the next two days, crowds of Kosovo Serbs gathered in the streets to protest against the recent events. On 14 January, after negotiations with officials from the Lipljan municipality and villagers of Novo Naselje, UNMIK police provided a written document outlining their procedures to increase security in the area. These incidents demonstrate that freedom of movement for minorities remains a significant issue within Kosovo.

Attacks against KFOR and KFOR operational activities

5. There were three reported acts of aggressive behaviour against KFOR personnel during the month of January. The KFOR soldiers were not harmed, however, nor were they in serious danger.

6. KFOR continued to be vigilant so as to prevent possible extremist/terrorist threats directed against international organizations and military bases.

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[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

[2] Decani suffered greatly in the conflict in 1998-1999, and the population is still hostile to the 40 Kosovo Serbs residing in the monastery.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

7. The armed forces of Serbia and Montenegro and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Police continued to remain in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Military Technical Agreement.

Kosovo Protection Corps

8. The current membership of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) is 2,908 active members, including 126 from minorities, of which 23 are Serbs. The actual KPC personnel establishment list was updated by UNMIK in November 2003 and the KPC reserve members list has been transmitted to KFOR.

9. During January, there were 29 roll calls at KPC units. The results continue to show a low rate of absenteeism without permission: of the 1,206 persons involved in the musters, 9 were absent without permission (this represents 0.75 per cent). The results also show that the number of individuals on leave, sick or otherwise absent has grown to some 30 per cent of the active force).

Outlook

10. While stable overall, the situation in Kosovo remains fragile, internal politics and inter-ethnic relations remain the principal factors which can undermine the security situation in Kosovo. KFOR continues to maintain a safe and secure environment.